

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR SECURELY AND DYNAMICALLY MANAGING USER ATTRIBUTES IN A DISTRIBUTED SYSTEM

ABSTRACT

One embodiment of the present invention provides a system for managing user attributes that determines access rights in a distributed computing system. The system modifies an attribute database, wherein the attribute database includes a plurality of possible user attributes and a plurality of users. Next, for a given user the system obtains an identity certificate from a certificate authority. This identity certificate is associated with a user from the attribute database. The system also assigns an attribute to the user from the possible user attributes, whereby the user is granted access rights based on the attribute and the identity certificate. This attribute is stored in the attribute database. Finally, modifications to the attribute database are distributed to a plurality of hosts coupled together by a network.